

REMARKS

This submission is in response to the Official Action dated January 14, 2005. Claims 1 and 2 have been amended. Support for the amendment is found on Fig. 2. No new matter has been added. Claims 4 and 5 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Claims 1-3 are pending. Reconsideration of the above identified application, in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Telephone Interview

Applicants thank Examiner Nguyen for all of the courtesies extended in the telephone interviews held on February 11, 2005 and May 18, 2005, with Denise L. Poy. Applicants also thank the Examiner for discussing the rejection of the claims and the claim language.

Status of the Specification

The Specification has been amended to state that the hollow portions extend up to a position substantially near an end surface of the outer cylinder member to surround the block portion on an outer peripheral surface and a side surface thereof. Support for the amendment is found on Fig. 2, and therefore, no new matter has been added.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 5 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner states that the use of the phrase "in such a manner as" renders claim 5 indefinite. Claim 5 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Hence, the rejection of claim 5 has been rendered moot. Applicants respectfully submit that for at least the aforementioned reasons, the rejection of claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, should be withdrawn, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.K. Patent Application Publication No. 2 364 558 to Nicholson. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons set forth below.

Claim 1 is directed to a vibration isolating bushing including a main shaft member 1 including a tubular portion 11, a flange portion 12, and a block portion 14; an outer cylinder member 2 disposed coaxially on an outer side of the main shaft member 1; and a rubber elastic body 3 disposed between the main shaft member 1 and the outer cylinder member 2. The rubber elastic body 3 includes a hollow portion 31, a non-deforming rubber portion 32, and a connecting portion 33 for connecting an inner peripheral surface of the outer cylinder member 2 to the non-deforming rubber portion 32. The non-deforming rubber portion 32 fills a gap between the flange portion 12 and an end face of the block portion 14 facing the flange portion 12 in the axial direction while also connecting the flange portion 12 and the block portion 14.

The Examiner contends that Nicholson discloses all of the elements of claims 1-3. Nicholson discloses a tube 10 connected to an outer sleeve 11 by a resilient body 12 made of rubber. A circumferential ridge 13 is positioned on the tube 10.

Claim 1 has been amended to state that "the hollow portion extends up to a position substantially near an end surface of the outer cylinder member to directly surround the block portion on a radial outer peripheral surface and a side surface thereof." As shown in Fig. 2, the hollow portion 31 surrounds the block portion 14 on a radial outer peripheral surface and a side surface thereof. Accordingly, the ratio of the elasticity in the axial direction to the elasticity in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction is increased in the claimed invention. Furthermore, it is possible to have a longer hollow portion 31. Accordingly, the main body of the bushing is more durable.

Nicholson does not disclose or suggest a hollow portion that extends up to a position substantially near an end surface of the outer cylinder member. As shown in Figs. 1, 3, and 4, Nicholson's cutouts are positioned at a middle position between the tube 10 and the sleeve 11.

Furthermore, Nicholson does not disclose or suggest a hollow portion that surrounds a block portion on a radial outer peripheral surface and a side surface thereof. Nicholson's cutout is not positioned near the ridge 13, which the Examiner contends is a block portion. Since Nicholson's cutout is not positioned near the ridge 13, it also does not surround the ridge 13 at a radial outer peripheral surface or a side surface thereof. Therefore, Nicholson's bushing does not provide the advantages of the present invention, such as increasing the ratio of the elasticity of the bushing in the axial direction to the elasticity in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction.

Furthermore, Nicholson does not disclose a connecting portion "positioned between a bottom of the hollow portion and the end face of the rubber elastic body on the side of the flange portion, for connecting the non-deforming rubber portion and an inner peripheral surface of an end portion of the outer cylinder member," as set forth in claim 1. The feature of Nicholson's bushing that the Examiner has identified as a "connecting portion" on the marked-up version of Fig. 1 on page 4 of the January 14, 2005 Office Action is not positioned between a bottom of the Nicholson's hollow portion and the end face of the rubber elastic body on the side of the flange portion. The identified feature is located at an opposite end of Nicholson's bushing from the hollow portion identified by the Examiner and therefore cannot be construed as being positioned between "a bottom of the hollow portion and the end face of the rubber elastic body on the side of the flange portion," as set forth in the claims.

Thus, Nicholson fails to teach or suggest all of the features of the present invention as set forth in claim 1. Claims 2 and 3 are dependent on claim 1 and are therefore also patentable for at least the same reasons. Based on the foregoing, the rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 4 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Nicholson in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,655,758 to Hadano et al. ("Hadano"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons set forth below.

Claims 4 and 5 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Hence, the rejection of claims 4 and 5 has been rendered moot.

Furthermore, regarding amended claim 1, Hadano does not disclose or suggest that the hollow portion "directly [surrounds] the block portion on a radial outer peripheral surface and a side surface thereof; the radial outer peripheral surface of the block portion extends circumferentially; the side surface of the block portion extends from the radial outer peripheral surface to the main shaft member." As shown in Fig. 3, Hadano's cavity portion 22 extends in the circumferential direction along the hump portion 11. However, Hadano's cavity portion 22 does not directly surround the hump portion 11 along a side surface thereof. Fig. 3 shows that Hadano's cavity portion 22 is limited to the circumferential direction overlapping the hump portion 11 and does not extend directly over a side surface. Thus, Hadano, like Nicholson, also fails to teach or suggest all of the features of the present invention.

Hadano and Nicholson disclose different ways of providing a hollow portion, but fail to disclose or suggest the hollow portion set forth in the claimed invention. Thus, neither Hadano nor Nicholson increase the ratio of the elasticity of the bushing in the axial direction to the elasticity in a direction perpendicular to the axial direction, as provided by the present invention. Furthermore, neither Hadano nor Nicholson provide the durability of the bushing of the present invention.

Applicants respectfully submit that for at least the aforementioned reasons, the rejection of claims 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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